



COMMON

PRESERVING OUR NATION'S HERITAGE SUMMER 2009

GROUND

1934

*A Stimulus
Package
for the
Soul*



FIRST WORD

BY ALFERDTEEN HARRISON

A Galvanizing Moment

LIKE OPPRESSED PEOPLE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY, African Americans have responded to hardship through a combination of resistance and adjustment. It is an important theme in the experience of American democracy, the quest for equality in the face of institutionalized racism. This is most clearly seen in the era of the “separate but equal doctrine,” when segregation was officially sanctioned by the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision of 1896. **WHILE “SEPARATE BUT EQUAL” SET THE TONE** of race relations for the next six decades, it also set into motion a slowly moving train of events that led to a night in 1962, when U.S. marshals stood besieged by rioters on the steps of a white-columned building on the campus of a southern university. Sequestered in a nearby dorm was James Meredith, an African American from Mississippi who had the temerity to apply for admission to Ole Miss. **HAVING GROWN UP IN MISSISSIPPI** and attended the segregated Piney Woods School, I understood white racial attitudes of the oppressive 1950s. Had I been aware of Meredith’s intentions, my reaction would have been great fear for his safety. I would have wondered why he was not satisfied attending Jackson State College. In those days, if African Americans wanted degrees in disciplines not offered at an historically black college, Mississippi often paid for them to attend a college outside the state, rather than allow them to enroll at a college meant for whites. Meredith’s position was that this practice denied him his rights as a citizen of Mississippi. **SINCE READING HIS 1961 LETTER** to the U. S. Justice Department, I understand his motivation in wanting to secure the best education in his home state. He wrote, “To be in an oppressed situation is not itself very difficult, but to be in it and realize its unfairness, and then to have one’s conscience compel him to try to correct the situation is indeed antagonizing and often miserable.” **BY THE 1930S, WHEN JAMES MEREDITH AND I WERE BORN**, many African Americans had been acculturated to take pride in the institutions of their segregated communities. Even though these institutions did not have adequate funding, they engendered in their students pride, self-confidence, hope, and the expectation of a better future. While we were taught that segregation was the law of the land, we were also taught that it was contrary to the 14th Amendment of the U. S. Constitution. Furthermore, we were advised to prepare for the change that was coming. **THE SEE-SAWING OF EVENTS DURING THAT TIME** made it seem there would be no change in Mississippi. The emergence in 1954 of a supremacist group called the White Citizens Council, and the 1955 murder of Emmett Till, told us that if we forgot our “place,” we could disappear or be murdered. But news of the Montgomery bus boycott was a sign that change could come. The formation of the Mis-

issippi Sovereignty Commission in 1956—intended to preserve the racial status quo—signaled that change would be difficult, but President Eisenhower’s decision to send in the troops at Little Rock’s Central High gave reason for hope. **IN 1957, I WAS ON MY WAY HOME ON CHRISTMAS BREAK** from college in Kansas, happy to ride wherever I chose, when I forgot that the bus had crossed into Mississippi. The driver announced that, by law, Negroes had to sit in the back of the bus, repeating it several times. I hesitated, looking at the empty seats in front of me as the driver threatened to throw off those who did not comply. When I looked back, an elderly man motioned for me to sit with him. He reminded me that oppression was still alive and well in my home state and asked not to give “those people” a reason to do harm. The incident would linger in my mind during future visits home. **MEREDITH’S DECISION TO CONFRONT THIS OPPRESSION** effectively forced the hand of the Justice Department, compelling its involvement in crucial battles to come. His defiance also encouraged an increasingly savvy NAACP to intervene,

THE SEE-SAWING OF EVENTS DURING THAT TIME MADE IT SEEM LIKE THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN MISSISSIPPI. THE EMERGENCE IN 1954 OF A SUPREMACIST GROUP CALLED THE WHITE CITIZENS COUNCIL, AND THE 1955 MURDER OF EMMETT TILL, TOLD US THAT IF WE FORGOT OUR “PLACE,” WE COULD DISAPPEAR OR BE MURDERED.

and continued to pursue change elsewhere. Primarily under the leadership of head counsel Thurgood Marshall, the group won legal decisions that led to integrating higher education in Missouri, Maryland, Texas, and Oklahoma. Today, a group of national historic landmarks honors these cases: Oklahoma University’s Bizzell Memorial Library, the University of Alabama’s Foster Auditorium, and the Ole Miss Lyceum-Circle Historic District. **THE LYCEUM’S LANDMARK DESIGNATION** recognizes the tragic events surrounding Meredith’s decision, but also memorializes a turning point in the fight for desegregation. That night in 1962 propelled us closer to the end of a decade of struggle. Alone, with no assurance of the outcome, Meredith forced the nation to take a stand. In the space of time between “separate but equal” and the 1964 Civil Rights Act, it was a galvanizing moment, one whose message—despite the shock and the ugliness—was hope.

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32 CRUCIBLE OF CONSCIENCE For many years, the University of Mississippi's Lyceum was an icon of the Old South. But one night in 1962, it became the front line of the Civil Rights Movement.

*Above: Homeward Bound, E. Martin Hennings.
Front: Paper Workers, Douglass Crockwell. Back:
Gold Is Where You Find It, Tyrone Comfort. All
were painted for the first federal art program.*

1934, OIL ON CANVAS, SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM

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Supreme Foundation

Capitol Chamber Witnessed Some of the Nation's Bedrock Judicial Decisions

Down a stone-paved hallway in the lower level of the U.S. Capitol Building, past scores of doors made of dark varnished wood, an unremarkable entryway opens on a hushed, dramatic scene. Beneath a low vaulted ceiling, in dim light that evokes an ecclesiastical aura, tables and chairs are arranged with the clear purpose of officialdom, while squat columns, arcades, and marble busts declare a calling higher than mere governance.

This is where the United States Supreme Court met during the formative years of the republic. From Thomas Jefferson's presidency to the dawn of the Civil War, justices, lawyers, court officials, and spectators witnessed many of the 19th century's most important legal cases. Some altered history.

The court occupied the chamber from 1810 to 1860. In the 149 years since, it has been used as a law library, a committee room, and a storage space. It was restored for the nation's bicentennial in 1976 and has been open for tours since. Recently, at the request of the Archi-



THE DRAMATIC, SWEEPING LINES, THE CLOISTER-LIKE EFFECT OF SUCCESSIVE ARCHES, AND THE VISUAL CENTERPIECE—A RELIEF SCULPTURE ABOVE A FIREPLACE—COMBINE TO PRODUCE AN ATMOSPHERE OF BOTH SOLEMNITY AND INSPIRATION.

tect of the Capitol, the place was photographed by the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park Service, with the architectural firm Beyer Blinder Belle doing drawings to HABS standards in a cooperative role. Says architectural historian Bill Allen of the office of the Architect of the Capitol, "In case of any kind of disaster we would not have had the [information] necessary to rebuild, so the Senate [wanted] this level of documentation."

The chamber was at first the home of the U.S. Senate, which was forced to move out by poor construction after only six years in the building. In 1806, Benjamin Latrobe, the Surveyor of Public Buildings and one of the most influential forces in early American architecture, began a complete redesign of the inside of the north wing. When that was finished, the Senate moved to the second floor, and the court moved into the lower chamber. Latrobe's presence permeates the space, says Allen. "It is one of the chief landmarks of his work," he says. Latrobe, a proponent of vaulted construction and Grecian architecture, designed a low, semicircular dome with a se-

ries of ribs radiating out from its center. The curved form repeats throughout the room, complemented by Doric columns. The dramatic, sweeping lines, the cloister-like effect of successive arches, and the visual centerpiece—a relief sculpture above a fireplace—combine to produce an atmosphere of both solemnity and inspiration. To carry the weight of the vaulted ceiling, Latrobe incorporated the columns, locating them inside the room, where they serve both a practical and aesthetic purpose. The dome exists fully supported within the original walls of the building. Allen says, "He overcame incredible challenges to provide a one-story vaulted structure within an envelope that was never intended to be vaulted."

During the War of 1812, the British marched into Washington and set fire to the Capitol and many other buildings. The chamber was damaged and Latrobe dismantled the dome and rebuilt it as part of the extensive repairs.

Over the years, the chamber was the scene of a host of landmark decisions. In *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, the court blocked a move by the state of New Hampshire to take over Dartmouth, a private institution established under a pre-Revolutionary charter with the King of England. The ruling established the sanctity of contracts and the state's inability to interfere with them. The case was argued by Dartmouth alumnus Daniel Webster.

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Two views of the chamber's vaulted space.

contact points email robert_arzola@nps.gov web *Architect of the Capitol* www.aoc.gov/cc/capitol/oscc.cfm *HABS/Library of Congress Archives* http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer/index.html







YOU HAVE THE JUDICIAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY BROUGHT TOGETHER IN THIS ONE ROOM, WHICH IS ONE OF THE MOST HISTORIC ROOMS, PROBABLY, ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY.

—CAPITOL HISTORIAN BILL ALLEN

The chamber was also the setting for 1857's infamous Dred Scott decision, which cut to the heart of slavery. Scott worked for an army surgeon in the free Wisconsin Territory. When the surgeon died, Scott sued for freedom, arguing that he was living in a place that prohibited his enslavement. The court ruled that people of African descent were not citizens, could not file for redress, and that Congress could not deny slavery in the territories. This invalidated the Missouri Compromise, which had permitted some territories to be free while others perpetuated slavery. The ruling deepened the divisions that led to civil war.

Today, guided tours usher visitors through the hushed space, looking down into the lowered area where lawyers presented their cases. The tables, settees, and writing desks are a deep mahogany, with the dim lighting intended to approximate the glow of the original oil lamps. A reporter once described the court as a “dark, low, subterranean apartment.” Justices who died early deaths were thought to be victims of its dampness and poor ventilation. There were windows along one wall, but these did little to alleviate the dimness. Today they are blocked by a 1950s-era addition to the Capitol and artificially lit.

The nine justices sat at one end on a platform slightly raised above the lawyers and spectators. In the center are the tables at which the lawyers sat, each with an oil lamp and a set of quill pens. On the opposite side of the room from the judges, there is a large arch and a relief sculpture depicting Justice, a winged youth representing America, and an eagle guarding a stack of books—to symbolize the law. Mounted around the room are marble busts of the earliest chief justices, with more than half of the furnishings original. Says Allen, “You have the judicial history of the United States and its architectural history brought together in this one room, which is one of the most historic rooms, probably, anywhere in the country.” And thanks to the partnership with Beyer Blinder Belle, the documentation yielded “a great set of measured drawings,” says HABS architect Robert Arzola, who reviewed the work for conformance to the survey’s standards.



LEFT AND ABOVE: *The drama of the space, in both main chamber and halls, with lighting to suggest the glow of oil lamps—once used along with sets of quill pens.*

LAND MARK

RECENTLY DESIGNATED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

NEW PHILADELPHIA TOWN SITE Three decades before the Civil War, New Philadelphia sat on the rolling farmland between the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, founded and laid out by Frank McWhorter, a slave who made enough money mining saltpeter to purchase his freedom, that of 15 family members, and 42 acres. He sold lots to African Americans as well as people of mixed race and European descent, who thrived raising crops and livestock in part because the place was at a crossroads near the two waterways. They persevered through violence between pro-slavers and abolitionists, but the town was abandoned after the railroad passed it by in 1869. Today, life in this early integrated community has been the focus of much study.

MIAMI CIRCLE In the center of the city for which it is named, the Miami Circle was discovered in 1998 when ground was being cleared for a condo. The site of a structure believed to be 1,700 to 2,000 years old—with 24 postholes dug into bedrock in a circular shape—touched off a flurry of debate in academia, government, and the media. A legal drama ensued with the bulldozers stopped at the last moment. Since its discovery, the circle—purchased by the state with the help of donors—has been intensely investigated, yielding artifacts and other evidence of native ceremonial practices, building techniques, and trade networks. The posts probably supported a large structure used by the Tequesta people, who likely encountered Ponce de León on his arrival in 1513.

SAGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL Located at Ganado Mission, on Arizona's Navajo reservation, the hospital—built by the Presbyterian Church—was the site of the nation's first accredited nursing program for Native American women. The program, established in 1930 by the church, helped bridge the gap between traditional healing practices and western medicine, drawing women from over 50 tribes. It was also a popular choice for students of Mexican, Inuit, Japanese, Filipino, and Chinese descent, an anomaly at a time when institutions did not offer such education to non-whites.

Christ Church Lutheran >>

Eliel Saarinen's modernist masterwork, Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis, brought the modern form to a traditional venue with remarkable results.

"Through his adept use of materials, proportion, scale, and light . . . he created a building having great dramatic effect and architectural impact, yet one that also retained a human scale," the American Institute of Architects said in bestowing its 25-Year Award. Although the congregation wanted a Gothic Revival building, the rise in postwar construction costs led them to modern design, a pared-down style resonant with the Lutheran faith. But when Saarinen's name

THE SEVERITY OF ITS CRISP LINES AND BROAD, UNADORNED SURFACES WERE TEMPERED BY AN ARRAY OF ELEMENTS: LIGHT-COLORED BRICK IN A VARIETY OF EARTH TONES; THE JUDICIOUS USE OF CURVED WALLS; SMOOTH, ROUND COLUMNS; AND TEARDROP-SHAPED LIGHTS.

came up, there was doubt as to whether he would be either interested or affordable. The Finnish-born architect was a force in the modernist movement then in ascendance, with works both in Europe and the United States. His design for the Tribune Tower in Chicago—though never built—had great influence on the development of the skyscraper. He designed America's answer to Germany's Bauhaus—Michigan's Cranbrook Educational Community, also a national historic landmark—and served as president of its academy of art.

Despite his stature, Saarinen took on the project. Pastor William A. Buege recalls a meeting. "I asked [him] if it were possible in a materialistic age like ours to do something truly spiritual," Buege wrote. "He soon showed me." Christ Church Lutheran, completed in 1949, was a sensation, stark and spare yet warm and contemplative, a signature mix that made Saarinen stand out from other modernists. The American Institute of Architects called it a place of "serenity and repose." The severity of its crisp lines and broad, unadorned surfaces were tempered by an array of elements: light-colored brick in a variety of earth tones; the judicious use of curved walls; smooth, round columns; and teardrop-shaped lights. Natural light and an abundance of white pine and oak enhanced the effect. Saarinen went to great pains to ensure the quietude. He minimized parallel planes to avoid reverberation and covered sound-reflecting surfaces with acoustic material. The result was an intimacy and directness that departed sharply from the drafty, echoing churches of old. Saarinen died six months after the church was built. His son Eero—now a legend in his own right—designed a 1962 addition, maintaining his father's vision.







THE FRAGONARD ROOM/MICHAEL BODYCOMB

<< *Frick Collection*

Built by Pittsburgh steel magnate Henry Clay Frick between 1912 and 1914, the Frick Collection is a key example of the “art house museum” as well as one of the nation’s preeminent art institutions. Frick, like his contemporaries the Mellons, Vanderbilts, Morgans, and Rockefellers, looked to European art and culture as a way to mark one’s sophistication. His house—and its contiguous art reference library, a 1930s addition—were the product of “the first period of major art collecting in the United States, one of the defining activities of the Gilded Age elite,” says the national historic landmark nomination. Today it remains a telling legacy of the wealth amassed by American industrialists. Working with architects Carrere & Hastings, who designed the New York Public Library, Frick built the Beaux-Arts mansion on a stretch of Fifth Avenue known as Millionaire’s Row. Advised by experts, he built an unrivaled personal collection, living his final years surrounded by art objects, the house opening onto a private garden, a rarity along Fifth Avenue. Historian William Constable sheds light on the context of the time, writing on the emergence of the “Great Master Collection” toward the end of the 19th century: “The new houses built by gilded age collectors had to be furnished with commen-

THE FRICK COLLECTION IS A KEY EXAMPLE OF THE “ART HOUSE MUSEUM” . . . FRICK, LIKE HIS CONTEMPORARIES THE MELLONS, VANDERBILTS, MORGANS, AND ROCKEFELLERS, LOOKED TO EUROPEAN ART AND CULTURE AS A WAY TO MARK ONE’S SOPHISTICATION.

surate style, sophistication, and luxury to provide an appropriate place for the display of artwork and as an attempt to import cultural and social validity using long-established European sources.” In his will, Frick stipulated that the house become a museum. Architect John Russell Pope designed the library as part of this transition, his goal the smooth movement of visitors throughout, between old and new. As a result, says the landmark nomination, house and library “read as a seamless whole.”

contact point **web** *National Historic Landmarks Program*
www.nps.gov/history/nhl/



LIHO 9329

The Road to Lincoln

“Handsome, but not pretentious . . . neatly but not ostentatiously furnished . . .” Those were the words of a reporter from the *New York Evening Post* describing Abraham Lincoln’s Springfield, Illinois, home in 1860. The man the reporter saw that day, and the place where he lived, reveal Lincoln as he really was—ambitious and hard-working, but very down to earth. It’s hard to imagine a legend as just a regular guy, but visitors to that same home today, now the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, get that sense through the artifacts of his daily life—the mahogany veneered horsehair rocker he relaxed in at the end of the day, his pigeon-holed writing desk, even the khaki-colored box cushion he sat on when traveling. “This is where he was preparing for all of the wonderful things he did in

THIS IS WHERE HE WAS PREPARING FOR ALL OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS HE DID IN WASHINGTON. HE DIDN’T JUST SHOW UP THERE. —SITE CURATOR SUSAN HAAKE

Washington,” says Susan Haake, curator for the site. “He didn’t just show up there.” For many, the idea of Abraham Lincoln conjures up images of a little boy growing up in a one-room cabin or a gangly, somber-faced 55-year-old sitting in the Oval Office, struggling to hold the nation together. What people probably don’t often think about are the in-between years in Springfield, raising a family and laying the foundations for his path to the presidency. As the city’s website boasts, it’s the “home of Abraham Lincoln,” where resides the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, his old law office, and even his account ledger on display in a downtown bank. To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the president’s birth, thousands are touring the Quaker brown Greek Revival structure to get a glimpse of his life with Mary Todd Lincoln and their four sons. But with many of the site’s 1,200 exhibited objects—and a virtual house tour—now in a new online exhibit produced by the National Park Service Museum Management Program in collaboration with the site, anyone can get an inside look. He was born in Kentucky in 1809 and spent most of his formative years in Indiana, before the Lincoln family moved to Decatur, Illinois, in 1830. From there he relocated to the riverside town of New Salem, where he held a variety of odd jobs, studied law, and was elected to the Illinois General Assembly as a member of the Whig Party. In 1837, after

LEFT: Commemorative ribbons were popular in the years after the assassination. RIGHT: A replica of the life-sized bust that Leonard Volk, a Chicago sculptor, designed in 1860.



SPOT
LIGHT



getting his law degree, he moved 20 miles away to Springfield to join the law firm of John T. Stuart as a junior partner—the same year the city became the state capital, a decision for which Lincoln was largely responsible. “It was the place to be,” says Harold Holzer, a noted Lincoln historian and co-chairman of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. “It was a bustling, growing city filled with lawyers and politicians; the seat of government, a fine place to raise a family, and a perfect place from which to launch a national political career.” But despite being busy with legislation and clients, Lincoln’s first years in the city were probably rather lonely. He periodically suffered from depression (which plagued him all his life), and hadn’t met Mary yet. After they wed in 1842, the couple lived in a boarding house their first year before purchasing the corner lot at Eighth and Jackson Street for \$1,200 in 1844. Originally a simple white one and a half-story cottage, Lincoln expanded it to a two-story to accommodate a family of five.

Today the house, managed by the National Park Service since 1972 and one of six park units associated with Lincoln, looks just as it did in his time, right down to the tree out front, replaced every few years to match the height of the specimen in a photo taken when the family still lived there. Because of the hundreds, if not thousands, of photos taken of the house from as far back as the 1860s, it’s no mystery what it has looked like over the years, and several historic photos in the web exhibit serve as eyewitnesses to its changes. In addition to Lin-

BEFORE LINCOLN GREW A BEARD, EVERY DAY STARTED WITH A SHAVE IN FRONT OF HIS ORNATE OVAL WALL MIRROR.

coln’s house, 15 neighboring structures have been restored and the pebble-covered streets blocked off from traffic. “It transports you back in time,” says Philip B. Kunhardt, Lincoln historian and author of the newly published *Looking for Lincoln*.

Much in the house today—restored to its 1860 appearance both inside and out—was not owned by the Lincolns. Only about 50 artifacts are tied to the family. Haake says they sold or gave away many belongings before moving, and the rest they took along. A neighboring family, who rented the house and bought many of its items, later lost them in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The house does boast some prized furniture placed in storage, but almost everything else is either a replica or authentic to the era. One clue to how the Lincolns decorated is a set of illustrations of several rooms done for Frank Leslie’s *Illustrated Newspaper* shortly after the presidential election.

Mary designed the decor in a fashion called “harmony through contrast,” based on opposing colors and patterns, with the front parlor’s floral maroon carpet a foil for light floral wallpaper and orange curtains. “It was the style at the time,” says Haake. The web exhibit features both a current photo and a Frank Leslie drawing of the parlor, considered the nicest room in the house, for entertaining guests.

It was where, on May 19, 1860, members from the Republican National Convention asked Lincoln to run for president. Scattered about is a mix of furniture styles.

While Mary later developed a habit of overspending, the home in Springfield was modest yet elegant. “She wanted the house to look fashionable, but she also had a practical streak,” Haake says, pointing to the suite of mahogany horsehair furniture. “It looked nice, but it was long-lasting.” It had to be with young boys running around and frequent visits from politicians and friends. Three of Mary’s sisters lived in town, so there was always family dropping by. Several chairs are scattered around the 14-room house. One of the more distinctive is a circa 1840 hall chair that the site’s staff have dubbed the Q-bert chair because of its 3-D pattern of multi-colored velvet blocks.

The Lincolns sometimes hosted as many as 150 to 200 guests, but when they weren’t entertaining it was everyday middle-class living, illustrated by objects such as Mary’s sewing gadgets and the children’s toys like marbles and wooden alphabet blocks. Lincoln was often not at home, visiting courthouses along the Eighth Judicial Circuit or at his office a few blocks away. But he was very much a family man. Before Lincoln grew a beard, every day started with a shave in front of his ornate oval wall mirror. Then he tended to household tasks such as milking the cow and fetching firewood. Lincoln loved spending time with his children Robert, Edward,



LEFT: Lincoln shaved in this mirror every morning before an 11-year-old girl suggested a beard would help his looks for the presidential election. Women would persuade their husbands to vote for him, she wrote. **ABOVE:** The front parlor, for entertaining guests, was the nicest room in house, where on May 19, 1860, Republican National Convention members asked Lincoln to run for president.

Willie, and Tad. Both parents doted on their sons, sharing a lenient style, unusual for the times, of letting the boys run around with little discipline. Some complained that they were spoiled, but no one could say they weren't loved. "Love is the chain whereby to lock a child to its parents," was Lincoln's philosophy. They had some of the neighborhood's most interesting toys, such as a wooden stereoscope that showed 3-D photographs of far off locales like Niagara Falls and the Taj Mahal. Friends liked visiting because there was always the possibility of a cookie or donut from Mary. Sadly, only Robert, the oldest child, lived to adulthood. Possibly the hardest year of the president's life in Springfield was 1850, when his second son, Edward, died at the age of three—an experience he would relive again in 1862, while at the White House, when 11-year-old Willie died. His fourth son, Tad, died six years after the assassination.

When asked if Lincoln had any hobbies, Mary replied "cats." He was a tremendous animal lover. The web exhibit features a photo of



HISTORIAN DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN SAYS LINCOLN WAS "UNCOMMONLY TENDERHEARTED." HE ONCE RETURNED HALF A MILE TO FREE A PIG STUCK IN THE MUD THAT HE HAD PASSED.

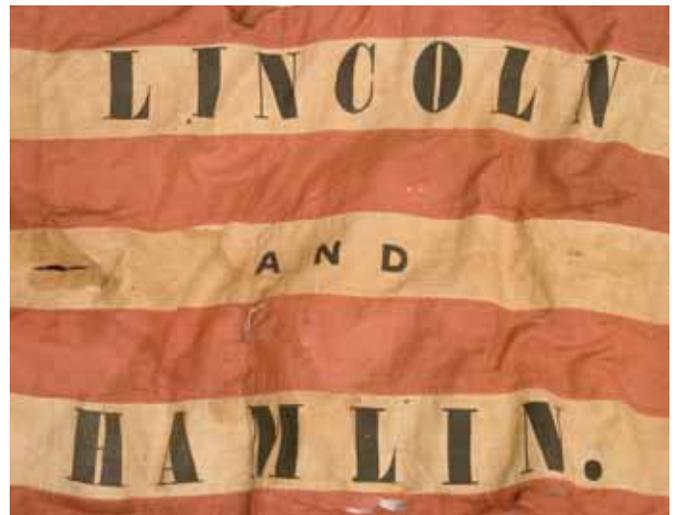
the family's flop-eared mutt, Fido. Afraid the journey to Washington would be too much for him, the Lincolns left Fido behind with a neighbor, along with a sofa for his exclusive use. Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin says Lincoln was "uncommonly tenderhearted." He once returned half a mile to free a pig stuck in the mud that he had passed. He possessed enormous empathy, unable to stand suffering, human or otherwise. The quality was one of his strongest traits in the White House. "One of the secrets of his presidency was his ability to connect to other people," Kunhardt says. He had regular visiting hours as president; anyone could go see him. His transparency turned opponents like Frederick Douglass into supporters. "You couldn't meet him in person and not experience his authenticity and decency," Kunhardt says.

Many of the artifacts merely create a context, suggesting how people lived in the Victorian age. The elegant brass candelabums in the back parlor weren't just for decoration, but a necessity for light. The necklace and stick pin displayed in Mary's bedroom (she and Lin-

coln had separate rooms) are fine examples of hair jewelry popular in the 1800s. Mary was one of the most fashion-forward first ladies, long before Jackie O or Michelle Obama.

Extremely intelligent, Mary could be friendly and quite charming. However, owing to her mood swings, temper, and frivolous spending, she wasn't very well liked. In later years, she was temporarily institutionalized for insanity, although many historians doubt that she was truly insane. Her marriage remains one of the most debated in presidential history. Did he love her, and if so, why? Did she love him? In her youth, she had vowed to marry a future president; was she only interested in him because of his promising career?

"I think theirs was a typical marriage with ups and downs," says Jason Emerson, author of *The Madness of Mary Lincoln* and a former ranger at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. "A lot of people forget that Lincoln wasn't a model husband either," he adds, pointing out his tendency to spend long hours away working. At first



glance, the two didn't have much in common. He had an impoverished childhood; she was the daughter of a wealthy Kentucky banker and grew up in a slave-owning household. She had twelve years of formal education while he was mostly self-taught. Her family did not approve of the marriage because he lacked the means to keep her in

ABOVE LEFT: *The family's beloved Fido in the first photo of a presidential dog, taken shortly before the Lincolns left for Washington, leaving him with neighbors.* **ABOVE:** *Hand-sewn campaign banner, with reversed American flag, from the 1860 presidential election.* **RIGHT:** *Stand for serving Mary's famous white cake, which Lincoln said was the best thing he ever ate.*



SPOT
LIGHT



LEFT LIHO 9476, RIGHT LIHO 1119, 1120, FAR RIGHT LIHO 56

an upper-class lifestyle. When they did get married, basic household duties like cooking and cleaning were completely alien to her.

But she wholeheartedly embraced her role as a wife and later, mother. Lincoln loved her white cake with almonds, a dessert Mary often served on a glass cake stand shown in the virtual exhibit. The recipe—created by a famed French baker who once visited her hometown of Lexington—is still sought out today. Despite her southern family's devotion to the Confederacy, Mary possessed a deep affinity for both the Union and the abolitionist movement, although it estranged her from relatives.

And she was one of Lincoln's most ardent supporters in the presidential run. After he learned the election results at a Springfield telegraph office, he quickly left for home. "There is a little woman at our house who is probably more interested in this dispatch than I am," was his response to well-wishers. "She was a great encourager and reinforced his sense of self-worth," Emerson says. One of the notable

IN 1952, FORMER ILLINOIS GOVERNOR ADLAI STEVENSON, THEN A PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE, GOT INTO THE HOUSE ONE EVENING TO MEDITATE IN LINCOLN'S MAHOGANY VENEERED HORSEHAIR ROCKER. HE LATER TOLD A FRIEND HE FELT "A DEEP CALM."

items from the presidential campaign is a hand-sewn circa 1860 Lincoln and Hamlin election banner. Designed as a U.S. flag, it stood as a call for unity in a nation divided. For the Lincolns, it also signaled the end of their time in Springfield. The couple invited 700 people to their farewell gala. It's not hard to imagine Mary resting in her splat back rocking chair afterwards, tired feet perched on her embroidered footstool. Some of Lincoln's last words to the city were uttered in a farewell speech at the train depot on the gray February morning in 1861 when he left, unknowingly, forever: "My friends, no one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything." Would he have returned? "It is hard to know," Holzer says. "He told some friends he would, but promised his wife he wouldn't—but I think he loved it while he lived there."

While the Lincoln centennial led to the minting of the Lincoln penny and the building of the Lincoln Memorial, the bicentennial is raising the question of Lincoln's "unfinished work"—the Gettysburg Address, one of his most famous speeches. He asked his audience not to think the casualties of the Civil War had been in vain, and challenged them to continue the work "which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced . . . It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us . . . that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

What might he have accomplished? Even 200 years later, it is still a mystery. Although looking at the breadth of research on the man, one has to wonder how that could be. It has been said that only Jesus, Shakespeare, and the Virgin Mary have had more biographies published about them. Carl Sandburg wrote an epic six-volume set on the man in the 1920s and '30s, and new tomes are still being written—many, even today, telling stories still untold. In *The Physical Lincoln*, John Soto suggests that the president was dying of a rare genetic cancer. Emerson's new book, *Lincoln the Inventor*, explores the patent holder who invented a device to buoy vessels over shoals. Emerson, who has spent hours poring over some of the original documentation of Lincoln's life, says many writers just haven't dug deep enough. "The subject of Lincoln hasn't been exhausted yet," he says.

Perhaps for future Lincoln authors, the Lincoln Home National Historic Site will serve as a source of inspiration, as it has for others. In 1952, former Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson, then a presiden-



tial nominee, got into the house one evening to meditate in Lincoln's mahogany veneered horsehair rocker. He later told a friend he felt "a deep calm."

contact points **web** NPS Online Exhibit and Teaching with Museum Collections Lesson Plan www.nps.gov/history/museum/exhibits/liho/index.html
NPS Lincoln Bicentennial Site www.nps.gov/pub.aff/lincoln200/overview.html
Lincoln Bicentennial Site www.lincoln200.gov Illinois Lincoln Bicentennial Site www.lincoln200.net

LEFT: A circa 1840 high-backed hall chair with upholstery comprised of 31 different velvets in a distinctive tumbling block pattern. The Lincolns gave it away when they moved to Washington. **ABOVE LEFT:** These empire-style dining chairs are part of a favorite suite of horsehair furniture the family saved in storage before moving. They feature mahogany veneer and shield-shaped removable seats. **ABOVE:** A low rocker with flowers carved into the top rail and a plush rose-colored seat.



ALL IMAGES FROM THE EXHIBITION 1934. OIL ON CANVAS, SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM

1934

A S T I M U L U S P A C K A G E F O R T H E S O U L B Y M E G H A N H O G A N

In the go-go economy of the Roaring Twenties, a picture like the one on the left may have seemed a paean to the wonders of mass production. Yet, painted as it was just a few years later—in the midst of the Depression—it becomes a scene of stoic resolve, men as hardened as the machine they serve. Economic boomtimes had become factory downtimes, and plants like this one sat silent across the country. So it is also a picture of hope, commissioned by one of FDR’s first programs in response to challenging times, an attempt to restore faith for Americans who had lost everything—stocks, bonds, and savings along with their jobs and confidence in the system.



LEFT: Man melds with machine in Douglass Crockwell’s *Paper Workers*. **ABOVE:** Max Arthur Cohn’s *Coal Tower* dwarfs a trio of diminutive dock hands.

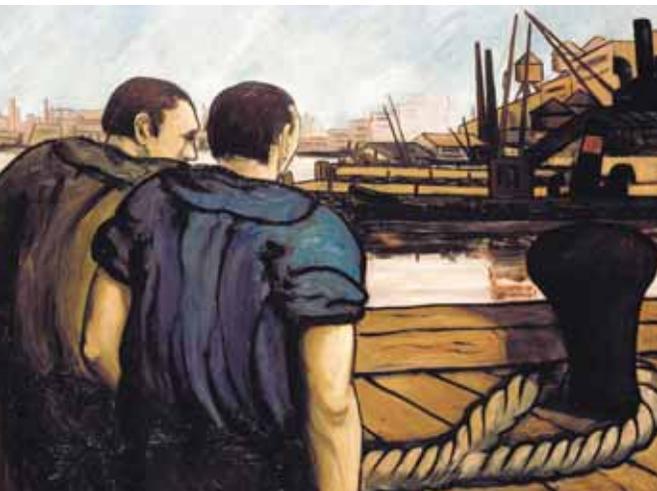
BUT IF OUR "WORST HARD TIME" WAS ONE OF HUNGER AND STRUGGLE, IT WAS ALSO A TIME OF GREAT ART.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is offering a look back at that time in paintings created by the Public Works of Art Project, launched in the first year of FDR's administration. *1934: A New Deal for Artists* features 56 works from the initiative, which started in late 1933 and ended just seven short months later. This year marks its 75th anniversary.

"We'd like visitors to enjoy seeing more than 50 wonderful paintings by artists who are too little known, and perhaps reflect on how these artists were encouraged to paint their world with such verve and intensity," says Elizabeth Broun, director of the museum. She adds that the exhibit itself was a response to economic hard times, relying exclusively on the museum's own collections rather than incurring the expense of borrowing. The show's debut, in the same week that Congress debated President Obama's stimulus package, added a touch of irony. "Although our exhibition was conceived as a historical tribute to the New Deal, it turned out to be a timely review of a 'stimulus for artists' created early in President Franklin Roosevelt's administration," Broun says. "Suddenly, 'history' seemed entirely current!"

Times were hard not just in America, but everywhere. Germans were turning to Hitler and Stalin was conducting a reign of terror in Russia. Violence and suicide rates jumped upwards, along with the ever-increasing unemployment figures. American Communists hoped aloud that their government would fail. The country could have gone the way of Eastern Europe, but instead it

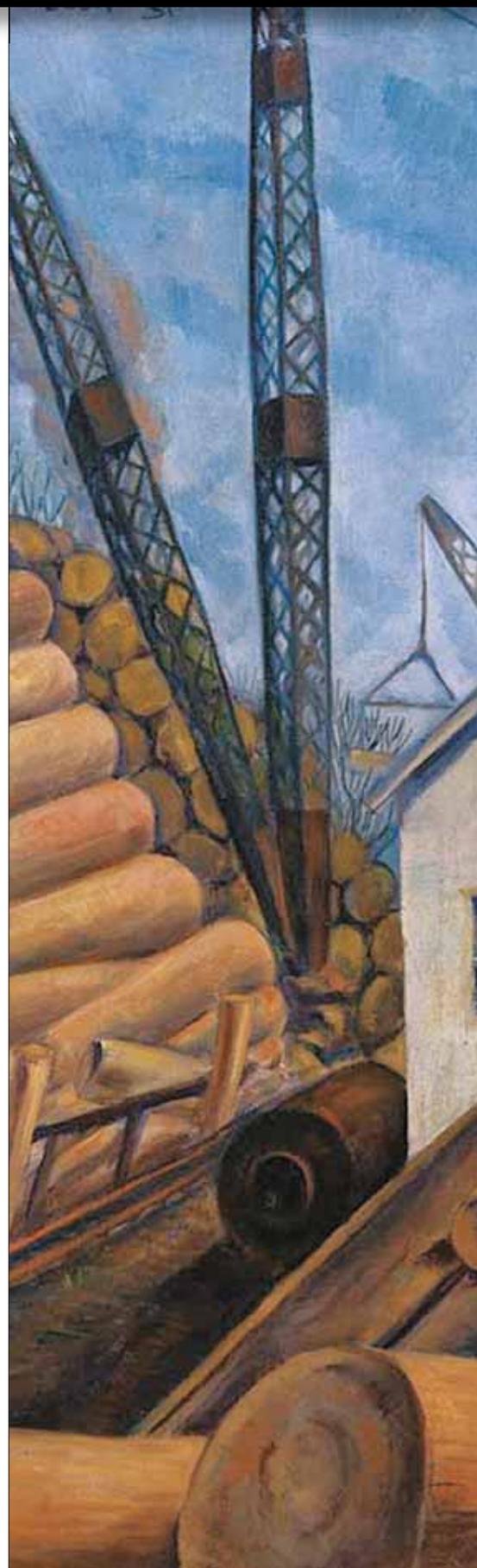
NOT EVERYONE WAS THRILLED ABOUT FEDERAL FUNDS GOING TOWARDS ART.



ABOVE: Pino Janni's *Waterfront Scene*. As Janni painted, a fight broke out among hundreds of longshoremen hungry for work. **RIGHT:** William Arthur Cooper's *Lumber Industry*. Most southern mills shut down in 1929 and stayed that way for three years. Cooper, an African American minister, captured this scene just as federal construction projects began to revive the industry.

The program's premise was simple: artists would create a work for public display and, in return, get a paycheck, anywhere from \$15.00 to \$42.50 per week. And five years into the Depression already, it wasn't a moment too soon. The economic downfall hadn't just appeared out of nowhere—American farmers had been having problems for years. But by 1933, after the second stock market crash and with the unemployment rate at an all-time high of 25 percent, even the wealthy—who "had danced the Charleston as the riffs of the Jazz Age mocked the miseries of the poor," writes Kennedy—were struggling.

chose optimism. It is said that in every crisis exists opportunity. And who better at providing the opportunity than Franklin Delano Roosevelt? New Deal programs were a "lifesaver," writes Roger Kennedy, director emeritus of the National Museum of American History and former director of the National Park Service, in the exhibit catalogue's essay. "The New Deal was built upon the precept that the pursuit of happiness of each citizen was only possible in freedom from want, fear, hunger, and hopelessness. This exhibition presents art that demonstrates what wonders of creativity may occur, even in the worst of times, once necessity is met and hope renewed."







THE PROGRAM WAS THE BRANCHCHILD OF EDWARD BRUCE, A BUSINESSMAN AND LAWYER turned painter turned government administrator, with a passion for everything art and a motto of “You can do anything you want to do.” After excitedly drawing up a blueprint for the project, he got on the phone determined to make it happen. And on the afternoon of December 8, 1933, in the ballroom of his house on F Street in Washington, DC, a host of officials and art museum directors gathered, among them Charles Moore, chairman of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, Forbes Watson, renowned art critic, and meeting chairman Frederic Delano, the president’s uncle. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt knitted in a chair as she listened. Also there were dozens of artists and art collectors. Many had questions, but all had open ears. And though there would be differing views later on federal funds for art, at that meeting everyone more or less agreed to move forward.

The meeting ceremoniously ended with a banquet, and Bruce happily sent out a press release at 3 in the morning. The project was formally announced just four days later. “Painters were getting it, people were on to it,” says George Gurney, the deputy chief curator at the Smithsonian

1934 WAS A BLEAK YEAR. YET THESE PICTURES ARE NOT BLEAK . . . THEIR AYE-SAYING ASSERTS UNQUENCHABLE CREATIVE LIFE AT A TIME WHEN EVERY EFFORT THE PEOPLE MADE TO GET THINGS RIGHT AGAIN SEEMED TO FAIL. —ROGER KENNEDY

American Art Museum. “Things happened amazingly quick back then.” Sixteen regional committees, comprised of 600 museum administrators, art instructors, and community residents, were soon formed across the country, tasked with hiring artists and assigning projects. While there weren’t enough jobs to go around in any profession, artists arguably had it as bad as anyone. “Artists suffered because they were pretty much dependent upon private patrons,” says Victoria Grieve, assistant professor of history at Utah State University and author of *The Federal Art Project and Creation of Middlebrow Culture*. And the wealthy weren’t buying art.

Although they needed to earn a living like everyone else, artists were often not seen as “real” workers, partly because average Americans had little exposure to art. Fine art was seen as very European, and millions had never been to museums or concerts and thus had little understanding of how art could impact their lives. But the artists knew. “The soul and heart of human endeavor,” is what Mount Rushmore sculptor Gutzon Borglum called art in a letter to a New Deal administrator urging funding. “To music, the charm of letters, the color and mystery of Innis and Millet—the power of Angelo or the burning words of Tom Paine . . . that’s [what] can coax the soul of America back to interest in life.”

The program wasn’t just about a paycheck; it was a chance for artists to do something new. There were no hard and fast rules. The only guideline was to capture “the American scene.” Even artists like Reginald Marsh—a regular cartoonist for the *New Yorker* who didn’t need the money—lined up for the prized commissions. Some even donated their work. “They were very excited to be thought of as workers along-

LEFT: Earle Richardson’s *Employment of Negroes in Agriculture*. Richardson, one of only about ten African-American artists in the program, planned to continue the “Negro theme” in murals for Harlem’s libraries, along with artist Malvin Gray Johnson. Both died before starting. **RIGHT:** Julia Eckel’s *Radio Broadcast*. Radio ownership grew from 12 to almost 30 million, serving escape over the airwaves.

side the other workers and not just idealistic dreamers, but people with families to support and productive work to do,” says Ann Prentice Wagner, the exhibit’s curatorial associate. While only 3,750 were hired, over 15,000 works were produced during the program’s short existence. While this exhibit only features paintings, the artists also created murals, sculptures, prints, posters, and photographs.

The program paved the way for longer lasting federal art programs such as the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project (1935-43), the Treasury Relief Art Project (1935-39), and the Section of Fine Arts (1934-43). Under their wings thrived initiatives such as the Index of American Design (for watercolorists), the Federal Theatre Project, the Federal Writers Project (producing about 1,000 books and brochures), and the Farm Security Administration (which captured some of the most vivid photographs in the nation’s history, such as Dorothy Lange’s *Migrant Mother*). The breadth of work produced collectively from 1934 to 1942 is truly amazing: 100,000 paintings, 18,000 sculptures, 13,000 prints, and 4,000 murals.



BUT FUNDING WAS NOT ALWAYS AN EASY AFFAIR, PUBLICLY OR ADMINISTRATIVELY.

Not everyone was thrilled about federal funds going towards art. Some complained that the programs were “boondoggles.” *Time* magazine described the art programs as “violently controversial.” Harry Hopkins, administrator of the Civil Works Administration, a short-lived subdivision of the Federal Emergency Relief Act established by President Roosevelt in 1933, was in charge of funding and initially obtained half of it through “official U.S. moneylender” Jesse Jones, chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Commission. The rest came from the bespectacled Harold Ickes,

A LARGE GRAY PLUME OF SMOKE LOOMING OFF IN THE DISTANCE WARNS THAT EVEN THE PROMISED LAND HAS ITS DANGERS.

Secretary of the Interior and director of the Public Works Administration. Ickes, one of the staunchest advocates for the still-young National Park Service, was very much a supporter of the arts. When the new Interior headquarters building was constructed in 1936, he had its walls covered in murals, bas-relief, panel work, and paintings.

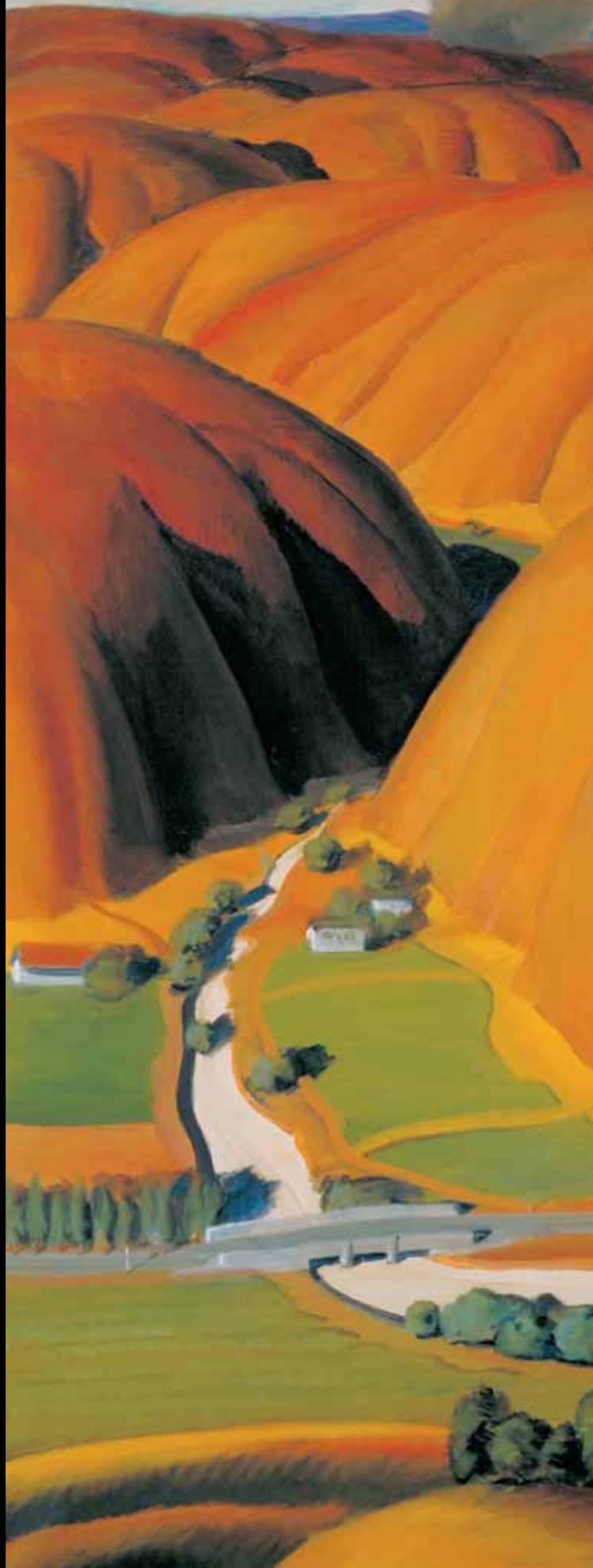
Early on, Hopkins and Ickes let each other do his own thing. But, as time went by—and this first program was followed by others—the two spent a lot of time sparring over projects, and direction. Ickes, whose stance against corruption had earned him the nickname “Honest Harold,” favored a trickle-down approach with money going to multi-million-dollar projects such as water and sewer systems, hospitals, schools, and highways that would, in the long run, benefit lots of people, with art as part of the mix. “In the long run” was one of Ickes’ fond phrases. Hopkins wanted to see immediate results and direct payouts. “People don’t eat in the long run, they eat every day,” was his argument. President Roosevelt brushed the differences aside. His response was “Why not? [Artists] are human beings. They have to live.” He must have known how significant the programs would be, because he once claimed, “One hundred years from now my administration will be known for its art, not for its relief.”

WITH THE PROGRAM’S START IN MID-DECEMBER, THE ARTISTS SET OUT TO FIND THE American scene in the dead of winter. The cold lent a stillness and sense of isolation to many of the paintings, underscoring their poignance. Several, such as Karl Fortress’ *Island Dock Yard*, show activity, yet no one is around. In *Lumber Industry*, a chute delivers tree trunks to a sawmill, but the painting is also devoid of human life. Still, artist William Arthur

RIGHT: Ross Dickinson’s *Valley Farms*, a portrait of his native California. The land is green and fertile—unlike the Dust Bowl plains that many had fled—but the mountains are dry, rife with the risk of fire.

Cooper shines a ray of hope on a devastated industry. “The fact that the wood is piled up and work is going on was something that would really be celebrated,” says Wagner. “You’re starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel.” Says Roger Kennedy in the exhibit catalogue: “1934 was a bleak year. Yet

these pictures are not bleak. They defy depression. Their aye-saying asserts unquenchable creative life at a time when every effort the people made to get things right again seemed to fail.” The vibrance of America’s melting pot (a good number of the artists were immigrants) comes to life in Daniel Celentano’s *Festival*, a painting that captures a place much like New York City’s Italian Harlem, an area better known as







ALICE DINNEEN
1934

Spanish Harlem today. As a Catholic procession marches towards them, festival-goers dance joyously in the street while nearby food vendors sell pizza, meat, and fish. In Morris Kantor's *Baseball at Night*, the crowd enjoys an evening game at a country club in West Nyack, New York. The club also sponsored boxing and wrestling matches to provide affordable entertainment for the public.

Perhaps the most popular mode of escape was radio. It was cheap, you didn't have to go anywhere to hear it, and the programming offered news, commentary, live music, variety shows, and of course, Roosevelt's famous fireside chats. Julia Eckel's *Radio Broadcast* omits the visual distractions that would have appeared in a real scene—such as scripts—allowing viewers to focus directly on the performers. Several musicians play their instruments and sing in the background, while a woman in an olive green dress, the lead actress, waits to say her lines.

Many paintings feature scenes from New York City and its surrounding areas, since that's where many artists lived, but the exhibit does show landscapes across America. New Yorker Earle Richardson, one of the program's few African American artists, gives viewers a taste of the Old South in *Employment of Negroes in Agriculture*. Although African Americans are shown barefoot doing the exhausting work of picking cotton, there is a sense of strength and pride. "The fact that they come right up to the foreground, particularly that this woman confronts you, makes you really look

ALTHOUGH THEY NEEDED TO EARN A LIVING LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, ARTISTS WERE OFTEN NOT SEEN AS "REAL" WORKERS, PARTLY BECAUSE AVERAGE AMERICANS HAD LITTLE EXPOSURE TO ART.

at them as equals," Wagner says. In *Valley Farms*, Ross Dickinson brings alive his native California, the promised land where many Okies went to escape the Dust Bowl and find better jobs and farmland. "That's where all the *Grapes of Wrath* people were going," Gurney says. A large gray plume of smoke looming off in the distance warns that even the promised land has its dangers. The risk of fire is captured by large orange-hued peaks looming over green patches of land, highlighting the contrast between the stark dryness of the mountains and the fertile irrigated valleys.

A FEW ARTISTS PAINTED SCENES THAT SEEMED TO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH AMERICA, at least on the face of it. Alice Dinneen's *Black Panther* lounges comfortably surrounded by palms, prayer plants, elephant ears, and a bright red caladium. The artist's feline model was likely a captive at the Bronx Zoo, and Dinneen found inspiration for the surroundings through repeated visits to the New York Botanical Garden. The result is an escape to a lush forest of fantasy, just as in Paul Kirtland Mays' *Jungle*, where deer and monkey-like animals frolic in an imaginary world. Mays, a muralist for cinema landmarks such as the Paramount and Grauman's Chinese Theater, saw his career shattered by the stock market crash of 1929. His vision is perhaps straight out of Hollywood. "It's more like an escape from the American scene," Wagner says.

Some works showed a lesser known, seemingly untouched America. In E. Martin Hennings' *Homeward Bound*, two Native Americans at New Mexico's Taos Pueblo—one of the country's oldest continuously inhabited Indian communities, now a world heritage site and national historic landmark—quietly walk in the snow, wrapped in their traditional blankets, just as they might have done for hundreds of years before the Depression.

MANY OF THE EXHIBIT'S PIECES SIMPLY SHOW PEOPLE BUSY WITH WORK—A LOT OF IT physical labor. In *Waterfront Scene*, a Pino Janni painting, two hulking long-shoremen eagerly await a cargo ship on a dock along New York City's East River. Jacob Getlar Smith's *Snow Shovelers* is a wintry scene of men out with shovels searching for snow-covered streets and sidewalks to clear. Some are appropriately attired, clearly accustomed to the work; others, smartly dressed in office clothes, are obviously used to sitting behind a desk. The painting is a stark reminder that the Depression affected people from all walks of life, throwing them into unexpected circumstances. The Civil Works Administration hired the shovelers as part of the New Deal, says the exhibit label. The men were probably grateful just to have a paycheck, no matter how unfamiliar or difficult the work.

Tyrone Comfort's *Gold Is Where You Find It*, which was chosen to hang in the White House, sounds a similar theme. Wedged under a low makeshift ceiling, wearing only shorts and boots, a sweaty miner looks suffocatingly cramped as he bores holes in the wall. Mining did not die during the Depression, despite its harsh realities, in part because precious metals held their value, and the price of gold actually increased. Some long-closed mines reopened as the hope of striking it rich spread across the West.

The theme of work as identity is perhaps best portrayed by Paul Kelp's *Machinery (Abstract #2)*. "You have a little man down here and he is kind of dwarfed by the machines above," Gurney notes. The face-



LEFT: Alice Dinneen's *Black Panther*. A few artists used the idea of capturing the American scene as merely a jumping-off point. Here, Dinneen transports her feline model—likely a captive in the Bronx Zoo—to a jungle escape. "It's a number of instances where the artists are painting something that they couldn't get support and patronage to do previously," Wagner says. **ABOVE:** Paul Kirtland Mays' *Jungle*. This work is even more fantastical; only the black buck on the far left is real—the rest are imaginary.

less worker, the smokeless smokestacks, the lack of product—the painting raises a lot of questions about what is going on in it, and what is not. “It appears that things are working, but what they’re doing, no one ever knows,” he says.

The scene doesn’t seem real because it isn’t. German-born Kelpé did not visit any factories. As an abstract artist, he wanted to create a painting about the working class and technology. He ran into problems putting across that vision, though, because both Bruce and the regional committees had quality standards and they generally considered abstract art beneath them. In the end, to get his painting accepted, Kelpé introduced elements of realism—hence the wheels, towers, and buildings. Still, like many abstract works, it revels in its contradictions.

SOME CRITICS OF THE PROGRAM ARGUED THAT ADMINISTRATORS ONLY WANTED TO fund masterpieces. The program’s primary theme was, arguably, a bit restrictive. “The American Scene excluded radical types of abstract art because the artist, in effect, was required to limit his or her creative activity to matching up some visible element of the environment with a picture that recapitulated the same,” writes Karal Ann Marling in *Wall-to-Wall America: Post Office Murals in the Great Depression*. To ensure quality, some artists were dropped if they didn’t live up to standards, and others were hired specifically because they were already proven commodities.

Censorship was an issue too, notably in the case of the murals painted for San Francisco’s new Coit Tower, an art deco structure built to honor volunteer firefighters at the top of Telegraph Hill. It was the program’s largest project, involving 25 artists who had all submitted designs to the regional chairman. Just weeks before the tower was to open, however, there was a surprise when the technical advisor, himself one of the muralists, neglected to monitor what his fellow artists were doing. A couple of them had inserted references to communism, a protest against the con-

troversial censoring of Diego Rivera on the other side of the country. Rivera, a famed Mexican artist, was in the middle of painting *Man at the Crossroads*—a 63-foot-long mural showcasing the themes of industry, science, socialism, and capitalism in the lobby of New York City’s Rockefeller Center—when building managers objected to his image of Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin. Rivera refused to remove it, and the entire work was secretly demolished with axes in the middle of the night, outraging artists across the nation. One Coit Tower muralist argued that what the errant artists had painted—a hammer and sickle and a Karl Marx tract—was part of the American scene: “The paramount issue today is social change—not industrial or agricultural or scientific development.” The communist references were mysteriously painted over before the opening, but the issues of censorship and public input would re-emerge powerfully in similar projects of later decades.

In June 1934, the program was abruptly cut short as its \$1.3 million budget expired. It concluded with an exhibit at the Corcoran Gallery of Art featuring 500 works. The Roosevelts attended, and even though FDR claimed not to have much of an eye for art, he selected 32 paintings to hang in the White House (7 of them are in the 1934 exhibit). Soon, other federal officials wanted works for their buildings. “There was a certain amount of infighting for things,” Gurney says. “The program was a rousing success.” Many of the paintings in this retrospective were ones that wound up in offices occupied by the National Park Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Department of Labor, before being sent to the Smithsonian in the 1960s, a better place to take care of them, it was thought. The works also graced the walls of schools and libraries across the country.

GRIEVE POINTS OUT THAT NOT ONLY DID THE INITIATIVE EXPOSE AVERAGE AMERICANS TO art—enhancing its stature as a profession—but along with fellow Depres-

ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW MY ADMINISTRATION WILL BE KNOWN FOR ITS ART, NOT FOR ITS —FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT



ABOVE: Jacob Getlar Smith’s *Snow Shovellers*, one of the few downbeat pictures, illustrating the harsh cold and sad reality of people having to take any jobs they could. **RIGHT:** Paul Kelpé, a German immigrant, was compelled to add elements of realism to his *Machinery (Abstract #2)*, one of the program’s few abstracts, reflecting American faith in technological progress.

sion-era programs also laid the groundwork for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities—both introduced by President Kennedy in the 1960s—as well as GSA’s Art-in-Architecture program, which stipulates that federally owned buildings must include a commissioned work of art. “The legacy is still there in ways that aren’t often recognized, even today,” Grieve says.

So all this makes *1934: A New Deal for Artists* a fitting recognition for the program, long overdue. “As these paintings come to us again three-quarters of a century later, they help us remember—as Franklin Roosevelt thought we would,” writes Roger Kennedy.

1934: A New Deal for Artists will be on display at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC, until January 3, before commencing a three-year national tour.

contact point **web** Smithsonian American Art Museum *1934: A New Deal for Artists* <http://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/archive/2009/1934>



RELIEF.



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CRUCIBLE OF CONSCIENCE

DESEGREGATION'S TRIAL BY FIRE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI BY JOE FLANAGAN

On the day after President John F. Kennedy's inauguration, James Meredith wrote to the University of Mississippi requesting an application. It was a seemingly mundane transaction. But as an African American in the Deep South of 1961, Meredith knew that applying to all-white Ole Miss was anything but. Nor was his timing arbitrary. He had been following the president's election campaign and was hopeful that the nation was, as Kennedy put it, ready to face a new frontier of unfulfilled hopes and dreams. Meredith's letter—in which he did not reveal his race—made its way to the university's administration building, an imposing Neoclassical Revival structure built in 1848. The Lyceum, as it is known, is perhaps the school's most prominent edifice, modeled after an Ionic temple near Athens, at the end of a long, straight drive framed by stately southern trees. When the staff sent Meredith an application form in January 1961, the first hint of a cataclysm stirred, one that would resurrect the ghosts of slavery and the Civil War, and cast a glaring light on the meaning of the Constitution, states' rights, and federal power. It would involve violence, racism, and death, and the Lyceum would be at its center.

LEFT: *U.S. marshals at the Lyceum, University of Mississippi, September 1962. Photographer Charles Moore was there when tensions boiled over at Ole Miss, a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement. The images he captured, shown here, were later published in *Powerful Days: The Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore*.*

RECENTLY THE LYCEUM—ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHER STRUCTURES AND AN AREA CALLED the Circle—became a national historic landmark because of what happened here. In 1961, though the Supreme Court had ruled segregation unconstitutional seven years earlier in *Brown v. Board of Education*, there were no integrated public schools in Mississippi. “Up until then,” says Jennifer Baughn of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, “[the state] was still actively resisting integration by building new black schools.” It was an attempt to placate the federal government and keep the races apart at the same time. “Massive amounts of money went into this . . . well after *Brown*.” According to Ted Ownby, director of the University of Mississippi’s Center for the Study of Southern Culture, “The university seemed to represent all white education in the state of Mississippi.”

James Meredith expected trouble. Before sending in his application, he spoke with Medgar Evers, Mississippi field secretary for the NAACP, who suggested he contact Thurgood Marshall, then director

mentioned in previous correspondence. It was an old tactic that usually worked. The South’s response to school desegregation in the 1950s and early ’60s took many forms, from delaying tactics to outright defiance. Likened to a counterinsurgency, historians call it “massive resistance.” In 1957, *Brown v. Board* was tested during the crisis at Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas, where federal troops were called in to maintain order as nine African American students attended for the first time. Opposition remained strong in the South, however, and through a variety of methods students were discouraged from crossing the color line.

MEREDITH WAS ONE OF THIRTEEN CHILDREN, RAISED POOR ON A MISSISSIPPI FARM. He served nine years in the Air Force before returning home with a quiet determination to defeat the racism that seemed to be taken for granted. With the help of the NAACP, Meredith took the university to court, claiming he had been rejected based on race. In early 1962, a U.S. District Court ruled against him. That summer, county authorities filed charges against Meredith for voter registration fraud, asserting he falsified his residence.

Whether he knew it or not, Meredith was about to become the center of a storm. The events that followed would affect the country profoundly. Asked about their significance to the Civil Rights Movement, Ownby points out Meredith’s solitary resolve. “The desegregation of the University of Mississippi was not a central concern for a whole lot of civil rights activists,” he says. “[It] was not something that these organizations plotted strategies for.” Meredith’s motivation was personal, though extremely powerful. “He believed he had fought for what Americans should expect from their country,” says Ownby. “He’s a native Mississippian and he felt that he deserved the best education the state [could offer].” However, says Ownby, “He knew he was more or less on his own.”



WHEN THE STAFF SENT MEREDITH AN APPLICATION FORM IN JANUARY 1961, THE FIRST HINT OF A

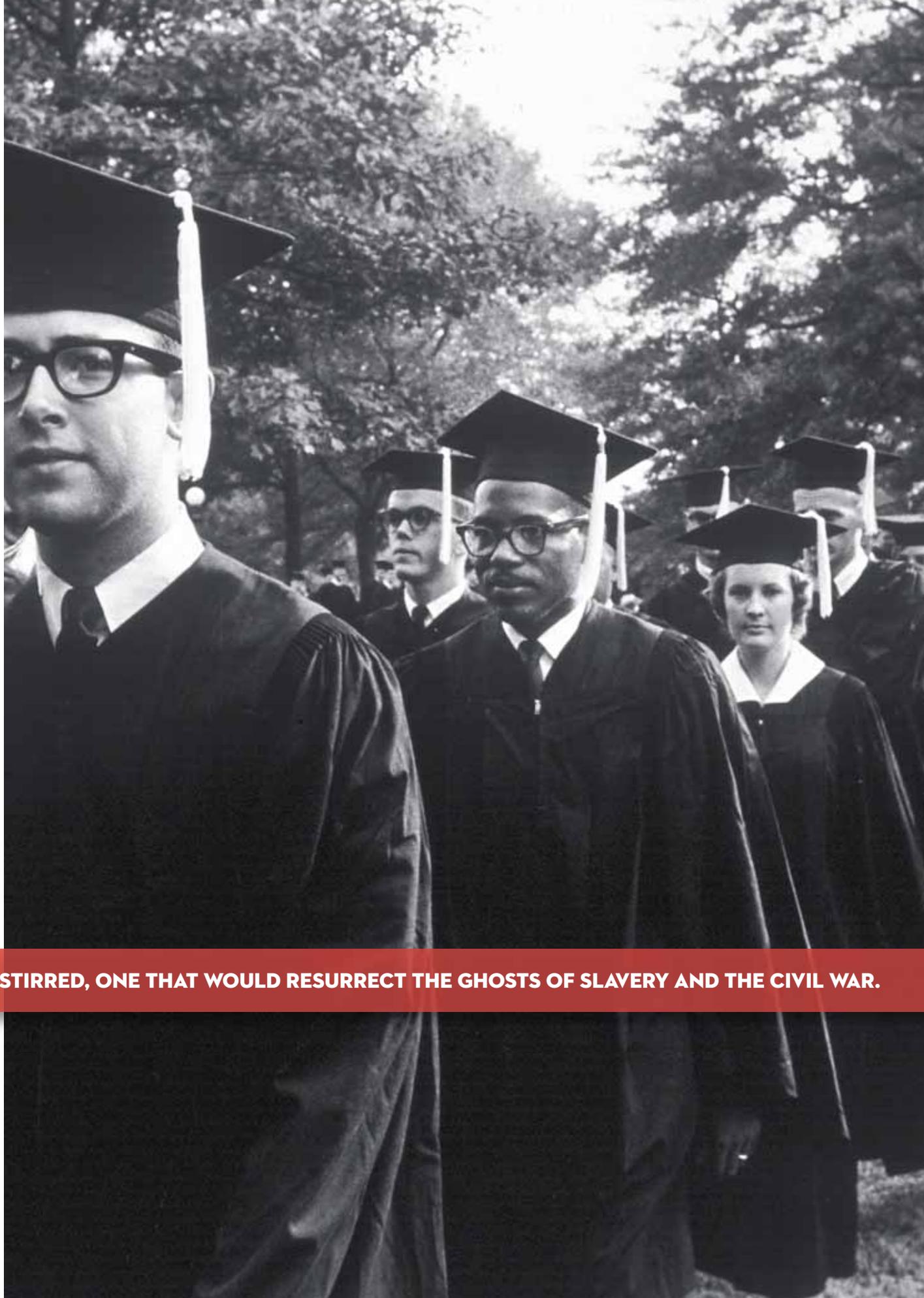
ABOVE: Ole Miss students. “Beer drinking college kids,” Moore recalls in *Powerful Days*. “I could tell by the way they were looking that . . . it was going to get bad.” **RIGHT:** James Meredith on graduation day.

of the organization’s Legal Defense and Education Fund. “I anticipate encountering some type of difficulty with the various agencies here in the state,” Meredith wrote, and asked for legal assistance if it became necessary. With his application to Ole Miss, he included a letter to the registrar, identifying himself as an “American-Mississippi-Negro citizen.” He sounded a hopeful note: “With all of the . . . changes in our old educational system taking place in this new age, I feel certain that this application does not come as a surprise to you.”

If the application was a surprise, the response was not. The university informed him that he had missed the deadline, which had never been

Meredith brought his case to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which decided that the school had, in fact, rejected him on the basis of race. This ignited a controversy within the court itself. Judge Benjamin Franklin Cameron ordered a stay, stopping any further developments until the Supreme Court could review the case. His colleagues on the court vacated the stay only to have Cameron reinstate it, a process that was repeated three times. At this point, the U.S. Department of Justice stepped in, asking the Supreme Court to resolve the matter once and for all. In June, it ordered the university to admit Meredith.

The Old South was about to collide with the New Frontier. According to the history that informs the national historic landmark nomination, “the machinery of massive resistance was gearing up for battle.” Mississippi governor Ross Barnett, who had campaigned on segregation,



CATACLYSM STIRRED, ONE THAT WOULD RESURRECT THE GHOSTS OF SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR.

EVEN NOW, AS I SPEAK TO YOU TONIGHT, MAKERS ARE POURING

went on television to declare his defiance of the federal government. “Even now,” he said, “as I speak to you tonight, professional agitators and the unfriendly liberal press and other trouble makers are pouring across our borders.” He invoked the sovereignty of the state, with impassioned references to principle, honor, and tradition that evoked a South besieged: “It is now upon us. This is the day, and this is the hour.” According to historian Gene Ford, who wrote the Lyceum nomination, the site—and what happened there—represent a critical time. “It’s the moment where the Kennedys are drawn in,” he says, the “flashpoint” where they had no choice but to act.

U.S. MARSHALS WERE GIVEN THE WORD TO PREPARE FOR TROUBLE AS ATTORNEY GENERAL

Robert F. Kennedy called Governor Barnett. In the meantime, Meredith was tried in absentia, convicted, and briefly jailed for the voter registration charge. The Mississippi legislature quickly adopted a law denying entry into a state school to anyone convicted of a criminal offense. The university gave Governor Barnett full powers as registrar.

Accompanied by a group of U.S. marshals, Meredith made his first attempt to register. Barnett blocked his way. The federal district court cited the school’s board of trustees with contempt, along with a handful of top officials. They agreed to allow Meredith to register. But when he showed up a second time, Barnett blocked him once again. The court cited the governor for contempt. On Meredith’s third try, Lieutenant Governor Paul B. Johnson refused him, and the court cited him, too. Emotions were running high under the glare of the national spotlight. It was evident to both sides that events could go out of control. Thus began a series of clandestine calls between Governor Barnett, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, and the president. Anxious to avoid another spectacle like Little Rock, the president, says Ford, “was trying to walk a tightrope between ensuring peoples’ civil rights and not offending Southern politicians, both of which he dearly needed for reelection. His brother Robert was more outspoken.” Finally, the White House had enough of Barnett’s stonewalling and evasive tactics. The president issued an executive order demanding that the government and people of Mississippi stop their interference and comply with the court order.

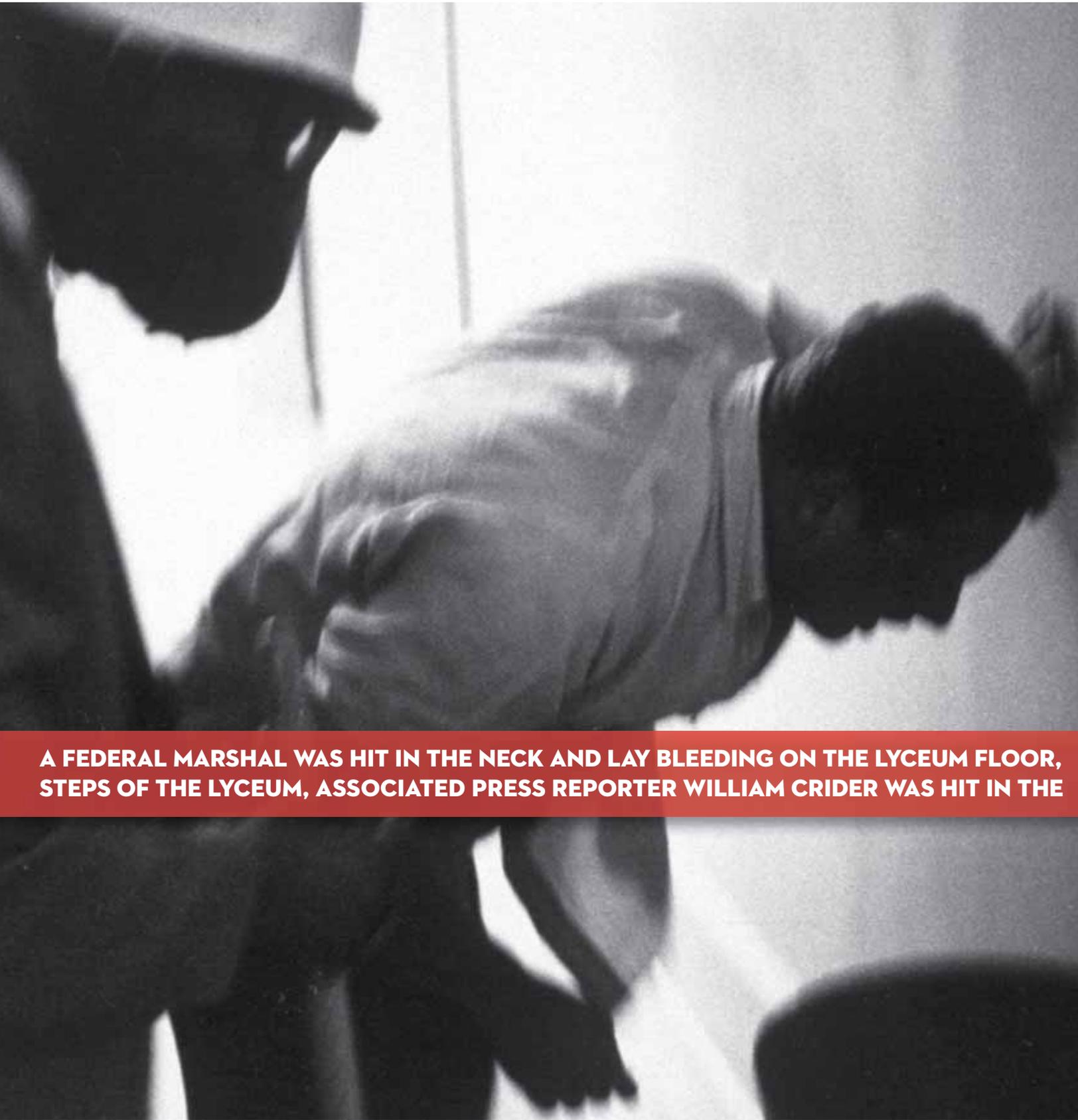
The following day, September 30, 1962, the president mobilized the National Guard, and Meredith arrived with federal marshals in a seven-truck convoy. Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach and a team from the Justice Department were also there. The marshals took up position in riot gear outside the Lyceum. As news of the federal invasion spread, crowds swarmed to the campus, along with the media. By

RIGHT: “They were talking about what they’re going to do to the U.S. marshals,” photographer Moore said of this gathering of local lawmen, “laughing and showing how they would take care of them.” On assignment for Life, Moore smuggled his cameras on campus in the trunk of a Volkswagen Beetle. He feigned illness to get inside the Lyceum, saying he had to use the bathroom. In the ensuing riot, federal marshals forgot he was there.



**PROFESSIONAL AGITATORS AND THE UNFRIENDLY LIBERAL PRESS AND OTHER TROUBLE
ACROSS OUR BORDERS. —SEGREGATIONIST GOVERNOR ROSS BARNETT ADDRESSING HIS STATE ON TV**





A FEDERAL MARSHAL WAS HIT IN THE NECK AND LAY BLEEDING ON THE LYCEUM FLOOR, STEPS OF THE LYCEUM, ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORTER WILLIAM CRIDER WAS HIT IN THE



LEFT: An arrested rioter gags from tear gas. **ABOVE:** U.S. marshals, assigned to enforce the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling, take the brunt of the rioters' abuse.

evening, the marshals faced nearly 2,000 angry demonstrators. Though the state police had ostensibly blocked access to the campus, the crowd continued to grow, bolstered by thugs and hardcore racists. The mob surged toward the white columns of the Lyceum, hurling rocks at marshals and journalists, among them *Life* photographer Charles Moore, whose images are shown here. To get access inside the building, Moore told the marshals he was sick and needed to use the bathroom. As the riot intensified, they forgot all about him.

The president went on national television. "Mr. James Meredith is now in residence on the campus of the University of Mississippi," he announced. He did not know what was happening at that moment: the crowd had set fire to the marshals' trucks and was attacking with pipes and bottles. The marshals responded with tear gas as the state police started to pull out. Robert Kennedy threatened

CLOSE TO DEATH, UNTIL THEY MANAGED TO GET HIM EVACUATED. STANDING ON THE BACK, THEN DRAGGED INSIDE, WHERE HE CONTINUED TO INTERVIEW PEOPLE.

to reveal Barnett's behind-the-scenes dealings if he didn't call them back. Meanwhile, the Circle had become a battleground. It was dark, and clouds of tear gas drifted over the campus. Burning cars lit the night. Rioters hurled acid at the marshals—which they got by breaking into the chemistry building—along with bricks and other objects from a construction site. The marshals forced them back, but they counterattacked. Inside the Lyceum, exhausted, injured men lay in the hallways and sat slumped against the walls. The ladies' bathroom was converted to a first aid station. Moore's photographs capture the scene, the mist-filled air suffused with a dull glow from the Lyceum's hall lights.

TRAPPED INSIDE, DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL KATZENBACH UPDATED ROBERT KENNEDY ON THE PHONE AS THE CROWD tossed Molotov cocktails. The sound of gunfire suddenly pierced the din. French journalist Paul Guillard was shot in the back at close range and killed. A federal marshal was hit in the neck and lay bleeding on the Lyceum floor, close to death, until they managed to get him evacuated. Standing on the steps of the Lyceum, Associated Press reporter William Crider was hit in the back, then dragged inside, where he continued to interview people. Local jukebox repairman Ray Gunter was shot in the head and killed.



BY MIDNIGHT, DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL KATZENBACH WAS AGAIN PLEADING FOR HELP.

ABOVE: Segregationists rally in Jackson, the state capital. **RIGHT:** The day after the riot, James Meredith is escorted to register by Chief U.S. Marshall James McShane and Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights John Doar.

Katzenbach called the president for help. Kennedy dispatched a convoy of National Guard troops, which was pelted by rocks, bricks, boards, and bottles as it crossed campus. The troops took position with the marshals but there was little tear gas left. Rioters blasted the federal forces with water from a fire truck they commandeered from the campus firehouse, and attempted to rush them with a hotwired bulldozer. Both vehicles were subdued with gunfire, but at about 9 p.m. the state police pulled out.

By midnight, Deputy Attorney General Katzenbach was again pleading for help. "We can hold out for another 15 or 20 minutes," he said. "Just get in here." Snipers were attacking from the adjacent rooftops now. A reporter for *Newsweek* likened it to the Alamo. U.S. Army troops were flown in from a base in Memphis, and in the wee hours of the morning their trucks could be heard grinding their way toward campus. With fixed bayonets, they rushed the crowd. National Guard units continued to arrive, and by 6 a.m. the fight was over.

THE EVENTS MARKED THE CRITICAL POINT WHEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THREW its full weight behind desegregation. "They either had to become pro-civil rights or civil rights were never going to happen," says Ford. The following year, two more African Americans, James Hood and Vivian Malone, attempted to enroll at the University of Alabama, and Governor George Wallace stood in the doorway of Foster Auditorium, now also a national historic landmark. "I don't think the Kennedy administration had any idea how resistant to this process the South was," says Ford, "but I think Ole Miss gave them their first real insight into that. Well before James Hood and Vivian Malone started advancing toward their date with history, Kennedy was working with Wallace to stave off another Oxford." The applicants ultimately gained entry, but not without struggle. Integration would be a long and slow process, but there was a growing sense that resistance was a lost cause.

James Meredith graduated and went on to study law at Columbia. Although he attended a 40th anniversary commemoration given by Ole Miss in 2002, he has distanced himself from the Civil Rights Movement and maintains he did not act on its behalf. Says Ownby, "Historians have been trying to get away from [the idea] of single heroes and leaders and instead see civil rights activism as a series of lots of local movements, unseen movements . . . Meredith stands out as an iconoclast, someone who was willing to do something that drew extraordinary attention."

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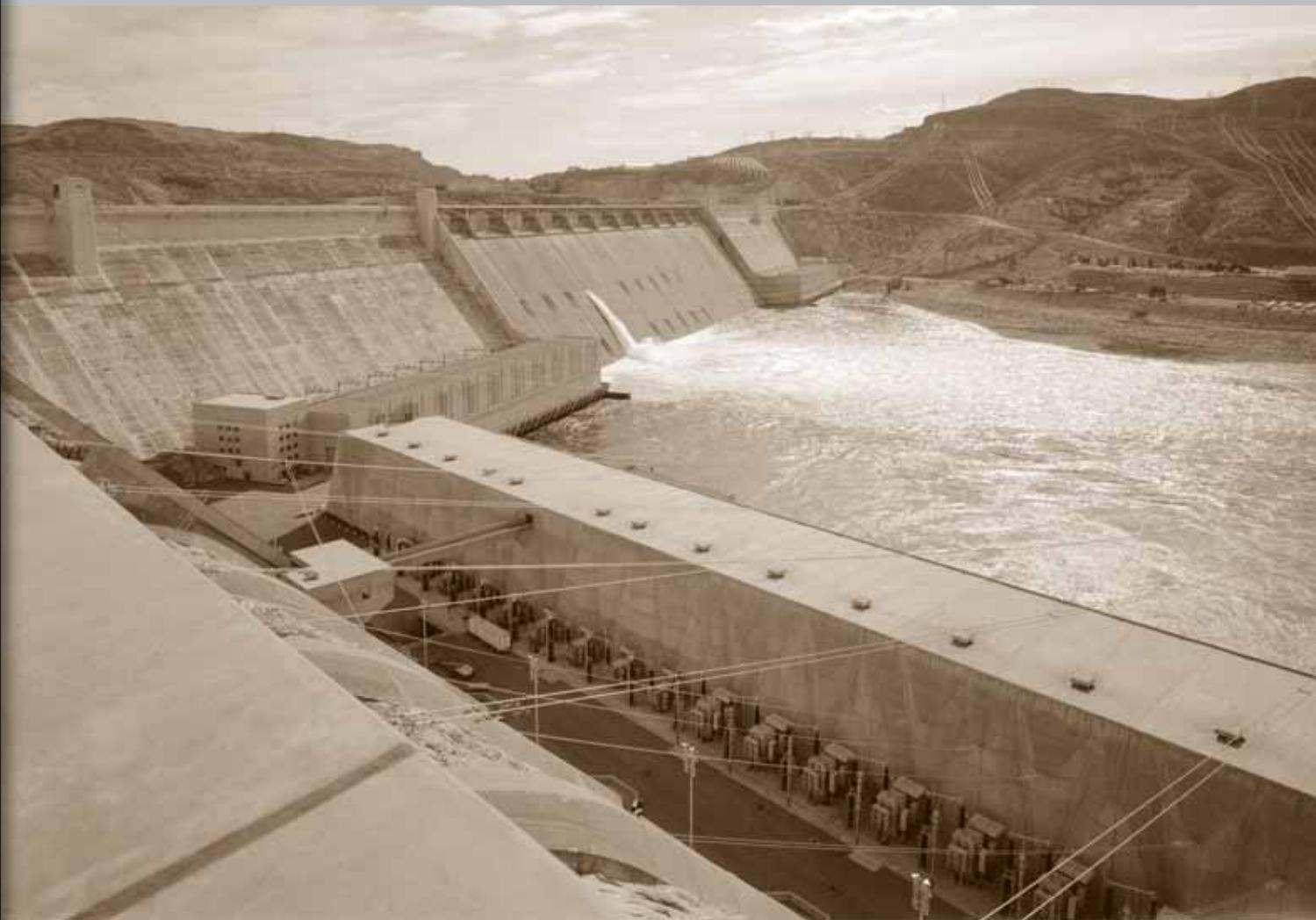


“WE CAN HOLD OUT FOR ANOTHER 15 OR 20 MINUTES,” HE SAID. “JUST GET IN HERE.”



ARTI FACT

World in Awe



IT WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST PUBLIC WORKS of the Depression, employing thousands and awing the world with its scale and ambition. The Grand Coulee Dam, part of a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation project to irrigate the arid Columbia River Basin in Washington State, became an American icon. The federal government hired Woody Guthrie to write songs about it. At nearly a mile long and 550 feet tall, it is both the largest dam and the largest concrete structure in the United States. Its staggering size is emblematic of the heroic efforts the government took to lift the state of a demoralized nation. **THE DAM WAS PART OF THE LARGER COLUMBIA BASIN PROJECT**, which encompassed a host of dams. But the Grand Coulee was the centerpiece, completed in 1942 after nine years of herculean effort and virtuoso logistics. Its power plants, one of which is shown above, produce up to 6.5 million kilowatts—the largest generators of power in the country—while irrigating more than half a million acres. Because of this significance, the Historic American Engineering Record documented the project for posterity, a portrait residing on the shelves and online at the Library of Congress (at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer/index.html). **TODAY, HOWEVER, ATTITUDES HAVE SHIFTED.** It is now known that dams have ill effects as well as benefits: they trap sediment and silt, slow down currents, raise water temperatures and, once they pass the 50-year mark, become dramatically more costly to maintain, a salient point given pressures to enhance their efficiency and environmental friendliness. Before the 1930s, almost a million fish coursed up the Columbia and its tributaries every year. Now, some 400 dams block their way—with many of the largest still run by the federal government—and fishermen, tribes, environmentalists, and others have sought change. **AGAINST THIS BACKDROP**, the Supreme Court has granted states more power over their dams, with the right to reduce discharge and allow fish to migrate. In the long run, other energy sources may prove less costly than maintaining these monuments to ingenuity, inspired by trying times.

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